

# APPENDIX

Statement of Lord Mansfield on the 17th of June 1773

That in the 17th of June 1773, I was present at the trial of a person who had been charged with the murder of a woman, and that I was one of the judges who sat on the bench. I was informed by the Attorney General that the person charged with the murder had been found guilty, and that the Court was to pass sentence on him. I was also informed that the person charged with the murder had been found guilty of the murder of a woman, and that the Court was to pass sentence on him. I was also informed that the person charged with the murder had been found guilty of the murder of a woman, and that the Court was to pass sentence on him.

Opinion of the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Mansfield, on the 17th of June 1773

I am of opinion that the person charged with the murder of a woman, and that the Court was to pass sentence on him. I am of opinion that the person charged with the murder of a woman, and that the Court was to pass sentence on him. I am of opinion that the person charged with the murder of a woman, and that the Court was to pass sentence on him.

## APPENDIX.

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### *Substance of Lord Buckinghamshire's Letter to the Chairman, noticed in page 76 of the Debate.*

“ That as to his (Lord B.'s) name being at the head of a subscription to take off by lottery the cargo of the *Rodney*, which could not find a market in India, he had no recollection at all of the circumstance. He did recollect, that upon the arrival of the *Hillsborough* at Madras, it had been signified to him by the Captain, that he should be utterly ruined, if he was obliged to depart without finding a sale for his goods. Upon this representation, he, with others, engaged to take his investment from him, at their own risk; and it was afterwards sold without loss. This was the only recollection he had of any transaction similar to what had been stated.”

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### *Opinions of the late Lord Melville, Lord Grenville, Marquis Wellesley, Lord Castlereagh, Mr. Pitt, Sir Philip Francis, and the Select Committee of the House of Commons for India Affairs.*

*Letter from Lord Melville, dated 2d April 1800.*

“ That the ostensible form of Government, with all its consequent extent and detail of patronage, *must remain as it is*, I am persuaded will never be called in question by any but those *who may be disposed to sacrifice the freedom and security of our Constitution to their own personal aggrandizement and ill-directed ambition.*

I remain equally satisfied as to the propriety of continuing a monopoly of the trade in the hands of the East-India Company. Those who maintain the reverse, appear to me, *to be misled by general theories, without attending to the peculiar circumstances of the trade they are speaking of.*

"The great interest to be attended to on the part of the Company, is, *that no goods come from India that are not deposited in the Company's Warehouses, and that the goods so imported are disposed of at the Company's sales agreeably to the rules prescribed for that purpose.*"

*Marquis Wellesley's Letter, 30th September, 1800.*

"It would be equally unjust and impolitic, to extend any facility to the trade of the British Merchants in India, by sacrificing or hazarding the Company's rights or privileges, by injuring its commercial interests, by *admitting an indiscriminate and unrestrained commercial intercourse between India and England, or by departing from any of the fundamental principles of policy, which now govern the British establishments in India.*"

*Lord Melville's Letter, 21st March, 1801.*

"The preservation of the monopoly of the East-India Company is essentially requisite for the security of every important interest connected with our Indian Empire; and so deeply am I impressed with the truth of this proposition, that I am prepared explicitly to declare, that although the first formation of an East-India Company proceeded from purely commercial considerations, the magnitude and importance to which the East-India Company has progressively advanced, is now so interwoven with the political interests of the Empire, as to create upon my mind a firm conviction *that the maintenance of the monopoly of the East-India Company, is even more important to the political interest of the State, than it is to the commercial interests of the Company.*

*Mr. Pitt's Speech in the House of Commons, 11th March 1793.*

"I have no hesitation in saying, that when all the circumstances are fully before the House, I am confident that a *Renewal of the Company's Charter will appear to be much for the interest of the country.*—It has been said that since the publication of the speech of my right honorable friend (Mr. Dundas) every body believes that the charter will be renewed: and I am glad to hear that such is the case, because it can only arise from a public conviction, that the renewal of the Charter, upon the terms and upon the regulations on which the East-India Company have agreed to accept it, will be much for the interest of this country in every point of view."

*Lord Melville's Speech in the House of Commons, April 1793.*

Stating "his full conviction, after mature consideration, that if the Indian patronage should be vested and concentrated immediately in the Crown, the *weight of it* would be too great in the balance of our government, and might prove dangerous to the spirit of the constitution."\*

*Sir Philip Francis's Speech in the House of Commons, April 1793.*

"With respect to the Renewal of the Company's exclusive Charter to trade to India; I have already

• Mr. Pitt said, he perfectly agreed that a capital speech had been made by Mr. Dundas; this the House and the Public already knew:—A speech which, for comprehensive knowledge of the history of India and of the various sources of the British commerce to the East-Indies, deduced from authenticated statements of Indian affairs, and for wise arrangements for the administration of our Asiatic provinces, and of the general commerce of the empire; a speech which, combining objects formerly thought irreconcilable, presented one great plan for the improvement of the whole; a speech which he would venture to affirm, though it might have been equalled in that House, never had been excelled.—*Debate in the House of Commons, 24th May, 1793.*



said, *that I do not object to it. . . . . I very much question the possibility of increasing our exports to India to any material amount, I mean with a rational security of finding a profitable vent for them.* Except military stores, ammunition, and other implements of war, with which it is not your true policy to furnish the Indian princes, the manufactures of England can hardly be said to be saleable in India beyond the trifling amount necessary for the consumption of Europeans."

*Mr. Pitt's Speech in the House of Commons, 24th May 1793.*

Mr. Pitt proceeded to examine the observations made by Mr. Fox upon the commercial and political arrangements in the bill. He (Mr. F.) had had recourse to the *common place topic*, that a free trade was preferable to a monopoly, insisting that the House ought not to forget this principle, unless very good reasons should be given for adopting a contrary one. *This speculation*, Mr. Pitt said, *had been repeated a thousand times by much less ingenious men than the right hon. member, and scarcely could have been expected to have been resorted to, as the force of it had been done away by his right hon. friend (Mr. Dundas) when he first opened the subject, bottoming his argument, not on vague speculation but on inferences drawn from history and from authenticated accounts.* Here Mr. Pitt asked *whether the claims of the manufacturers had not been listened to and provided for, and whether the exclusive privilege of the Company had not been rendered subservient to the resources of the Empire?*

*Lord Grenville's Speech in the House of Lords, 3d June 1793.*

Lord Grenville said "that if it were necessary for him to enter at large, into any general detail on the subject of our possessions in India, or any speculative discussion with respect to the mode in which India ought to be governed, and in which the trade of that country ought to be carried on, it would open a very

wide and extensive field indeed; but, in the present case, it did not appear to him that this was in any shape necessary, because he felt that the ground he had to go on was very much narrowed, by having a just and well-founded experience as a guide; a guide which was at all times perhaps the best, but more particularly so under such circumstances as existed at present. *Nine years experience had proved the benefit of the present system, and there appeared therefore no just reason why it should be altered.* The present bill of course assumed for its principle the continuance of that system; but as ideas had been entertained by some, that in the hands of the East-India Company, the trade to India, was confined within narrower limits, than would be the case were it open to be engaged in by the whole capital and the whole spirit of enterprise of this country; provisions were now, for the first time, introduced into the present bill, which would give an opportunity for trying the experiment, by allowing merchants and traders to adventure on their own bottom under certain NECESSARY regulations.

*Lord Castlereagh's Opinion expressed in the Debate in the House of Commons on the East-India Budget, 18th July 1806.*

It seemed, however, unjust to describe the Company's commerce as carried on at a loss. To what precise extent it might be profitable, after providing a liberal dividend to the proprietors, might be a matter of more difficult calculation, and must, like all commercial results, be in its nature fluctuating; but, in reasoning upon this branch of the Company's affairs, the worthy alderman (Mr. Prinsep) must establish several preliminary facts, before he can expect to persuade Parliament that the commercial existence of the Company is to be considered merely on grounds of mercantile profit. He must be prepared to shew that individuals would be as likely to carry on steadily the commerce of India, under all the fluctuations to which such a trade is liable, where the outgoings are great, and the returns distant, as a great trading

corporation. He must be prepared to dispel the apprehensions which must be entertained with respect to the injurious influence on the prosperity of India, which may be the consequence of an unsteady and unequal demand for their produce, before he can expect to satisfy Parliament that an intercourse, perfectly unrestrained, is preferable to that qualified intercourse, partly free and partly restricted, which now prevails. If he assumes, that individuals by using an inferior description of tonnage, could carry on the trade at less expense, and consequently at greater profit, he must be prepared to shew, that this is not merely by throwing the difference of the expense on the public, by rendering numerous and expensive convoys requisite to protect their feeble vessels in time of war, whilst the Company's ships, with a comparatively slight aid from our navy, are competent to protect each other, and to set the enemy's ships of war, even when in considerable force, at defiance. He must be prepared to shew, that such an establishment as that of the Company, could be kept up without the protection of a qualified monopoly; or that such a system is in itself unnecessary to the political existence of the Company, and the management of large territorial revenues, when both in peace and in war funds must be transferred through the medium of commerce from India to Europe and from Europe to India. He must also shew, before he can establish that the interest of the manufacturer at home is interested in such a change, that individual speculators would be disposed to send out British manufactures, even at some loss, as the Company have frequently done, or that there is any other limit to the amount of this description of export, on the part of the Company, than the utmost quantity the Indian market can take off, which they have not hitherto been able, with their most strenuous efforts and some sacrifices, to carry beyond 2,000,000 a year. These, and many other important doubts must be solved, before any satisfactory or sound conclusion can be come to, on the great practical question (Private

Trade), to which the worthy alderman, somewhat out of time, had been solicitous to point the attention of the Committee.

*Fifth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, July 1812.*

The Committee, after declaring that they felt it a part of their duty to offer some account of the nature and history of the extensive establishments for the internal administration of India, "trust that such an account will be acceptable to the House, not only as shewing the importance and utility of the establishments themselves, to the welfare and order of the country, but as evincing the *unremitting anxiety that has influenced the efforts of those to whom the government of our Indian possessions has been consigned, to establish a system of administration best calculated to promote the confidence, and conciliate the feelings of the native inhabitants, not less by a respect for their own institutions, than by the endeavour gradually to engraft upon them such improvements, as might shield, under the safeguard of equal laws, every class of the people from the oppressions of power, and communicate to them that sense of protection and assurance of justice, which is the efficient spring of all public prosperity and happiness.*

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*Historical and Commercial Data on which the East-India Company's Charter was renewed in the year 1793.—Extract of a Report from the Select Committee, laid before Parliament, previous to passing the Regulating Act in 1793.*

So early as the year 1600, in the infancy of the East-India Trade, the propriety of rendering it a Monopoly became evident to Queen Elizabeth. This truth, thus early acknowledged, has been since considered as an axiom of Government. Whenever it has been departed from, the evils arising from the innovation proved their own cure.

Under reigns so different as those of the Stuarts, and William the Third, this monopolized commerce continued to be guarded by very strong measures of Government.

The Nation even thought necessary to make it a stipulation in the Treaty of Vienna, (concluded in 1731) that the Emperor Charles VI. should, in favour of the British monopoly, give up the Ostend Company, his favourite scheme, in protection of which he had long shut his ears against the clamours of Great Britain and Holland.

The short periods for which the Charter has been, from time to time, renewed, prove that however experience might convince, as to the advantages of an exclusive trade, still there existed in Government a laudable caution with respect to the public benefit, in reserving a power of resumption at a short period.

From this caution, the Company's monopoly, in deriving its stability, derives its glory; for repeated Charters, Royal Proclamations, and Acts of Parliament, have sanctioned the wise policy of Elizabeth.

The emergencies of Government, and that prudence which sometimes prescribes a temporary sacrifice to popular prejudice, have indeed, at some periods, seemed to favour the views of individual adventurers. But these appearances lasted no longer than the necessity which extorted them. It was rather a connivance than a licence.

Neither does it appear that these individuals ever succeeded in their speculations. They bought at a high price, from the poverty of the State, or the venality of its members, a permission to ruin themselves.

There occurs only one instance that forms an exception to the uniform opinion of Government on this great and important commercial point; it is the attempt of Oliver Cromwell, about the year 1655, to lay the trade open. This bold experiment terminated as might have been expected; it confirmed the Protector in the wisdom of that policy which he had doubted—The monopoly was re-established, and

the Company's temporary abolition became, in its consequences, their triumph.

*Speech of EARL MOIRA, at the Entertainment given to his Lordship by the Court of Directors at the City of London Tavern, the 29th January 1813, previous to his departure to assume the office of Governor General, and Commander-in-Chief of the Company's Forces in India.*

The Chairman (Sir H. INGLIS) having given—

“ Lord Moira, and success to his Government.”

After returning thanks for the honour done him, and expressing his earnest desire to merit it by the zeal with which he should endeavour to maintain the important interests committed to his management, his Lordship adverted to the inseparable connexion of those interests with the welfare of the Empire. The sources of that public-prosperity which had raised this country so far beyond any other in the world, had been happily suggested to their reflection by the song “ God save the King,” to which they had listened with so much pleasure. It was indeed to the liberty which this country enjoys under the reign of the Brunswick line, that we must refer all our blessings. The consciousness of this freedom is the spring of all that individual exertion whence arises the strength and splendour of the British Empire. The commerce which has furnished the nerves of that strength, could only have received its energy from the security felt by every one engaged in it, for his undisturbed enjoyment of all that his skill and activity might acquire. The stupendous structure with which he on this occasion had the honour of being publicly connected, rested on no other foundation. And to what a pitch had it been carried!—That room exhibited a strict verification of what elsewhere was but a rhetorical figure. “ Her Merchants are Princes,”—Princes, not in extent of



territory alone; but in elevation of soul, and liberality of spirit—Princes, not merely in imperial sway, but in the bestowal of blessings on all over whom they ruled. It had been his duty of late to peruse with particular attention the instructions transmitted from time to time by the Directors, for the management of their possessions in India. The generous equity, the active and unremitting solicitude for the comfort of their Indian subjects, which those instructions uniformly evinced, afforded the proudest triumph for the British character. How nobly those dispositions of the Directors had been seconded by the servants of the Company in India should not rest upon his vague assertion. He would appeal to testimony beyond the reach of possible suspicion. He would recur to documents which afford irrefragable conclusion as to the inestimable advantages obtained by the natives of those districts which had fallen under the dominion of the Company. He alluded to the Reports of the Committee of the House of Commons; judges, so far from partial, that they acted upon severe, if not even hostile, scrutiny. What have these Reports exhibited?—rapid increase of population from the hour that each district became a part of the Company's possessions;—surprising augmentation of revenue, although innumerable imposts, to which the inhabitants had been subjected under their own Princes, were suppressed by the Government of the Company: in short, all that can indicate confidence and security, happiness and affluence. He could not point at those additions of territory without recollecting the valour and conduct of that army to which the empire owed such important acquisitions. He was well aware, that no eulogy from him could render more vivid the lustre which justly attended their services; but it was his pride to have been addressed that day by a title (Commander-in-Chief) which identified him, in all but the glory of their achievements, with the army of the Company: and he might be allowed, from feeling a common interest with it, the gratification of this assertion of its merits. The ability of its officers, the

gallantry of the troops, the splendour of its actions, through a long period of our history ; the persevering fortitude with which it has resisted combinations where its numbers appeared wholly disproportioned to the peril—its humanity to the conquered no less signal than its intrepidity in the contest ; and the immense value of those possessions which it has added to the general stock, must ever hold forth that army as an object of admiration and respect to the British people. Was there aught beyond this ?—yes, that army had the glorious consciousness of having planted benefits wherever it has raised its trophies, and of having marked the career of its triumphs by the diffusion of all the blessings which flow from the distribution of impartial justice and the protection of an enlightened government. Such was the fabric which he had the high distinction of being entrusted to superintend. He saw, yet saw with satisfaction, no brilliancy of career before him, because his predecessors in the Government, and those who had gone before him in the military command, had left no difficulty to be encountered—no dangers to be subdued—still there was enough to gratify honest ambition. It would be sufficient praise for him, if by vigilance and patient assiduity, he could preserve unimpaired that sublime edifice of national glory, which had been reared by the supereminent talents and unconquerable valour of former servants of the Company.

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*Extract from the SHEFFIELD PETITION, adverted to by Mr. Grant (the Director), in the preceding Debate.*

—Alarming state of commerce in consequence of exclusion from the Continent of Europe, from America, from Africa, by the difficulty of access, and barbarism of the inhabitants, and from the richest provinces of Asia by the monopoly of the East-India Company, the discontinuance of which would be one

of the most easy and effectual measures for relieving the distresses of the manufacturers, &c. by the discovery and establishment of such new and abundant markets, as would enable us to set at defiance the efforts of the Ruler of France. "If the trade of this United Kingdom were permitted to flow unimpeded over those extensive, luxuriant, and opulent regions, though it might, in the outset, like a torrent repress, swollen by obstruction, when its sluices were first opened, break forth with uncontrollable impetuosity, deluging instead of supplying the district before it; yet, that very violence which at the beginning might be partially injurious, would in the issue prove highly and permanently beneficial; no part being unvisited, the waters of commerce, that spread over the face of the land, as they subsided might wear themselves channels through which they might continue to flow ever afterwards in regular and fertilizing streams; and that to the wealthy, enterprizing, honorable and indefatigable British merchant, conducting in person his own concerns, no obstacle would prove insurmountable, no prejudice invincible, no difficulty disheartning: wants where he found them he would supply, where they did not exist he would create them, by affording the means of gratification.

#### THE END.

EAST-INDIA QUESTION.  

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**DEBATES**  
AT THE  
GENERAL COURT OF PROPRIETORS  
OF  
EAST-INDIA STOCK,  
ON  
THE 17TH AND 23D FEBRUARY 1813,  
ON  
*A PETITION TO PARLIAMENT*  
FOR A  
**RENEWAL**  
OF THE  
**COMPANY'S CHARTER**  
AS FAR AS IT REGARDS  
THEIR EXCLUSIVE PRIVILEGES.

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BY THE EDITOR OF THE FORMER DEBATES.  

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WITH AN  
**APPENDIX:**

CONTAINING

*A Copy of the Petition, and the Report of the Committee of Secret  
Correspondence, detailing Observations and Opinions on the several  
Petitions from the Outports, &c. &c.*

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where may be had, likewise, all the former Debates.

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1813.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

THE *Editor* has, at length, completed the Debates held at the several adjourned COURTS OF PROPRIETORS, on what, for distinction's sake, has been called

### THE INDIA QUESTION:

and whether it be considered in respect to the welfare of the *Company*, the happiness of *Eastern millions*, or the safety of the *British Empire*, it is one of the most momentous questions that could agitate the interest, the talents, and the honour of the greatest orators and statesmen. As the same question is to be solemnly discussed in the Houses of Parliament, he conjures the Members of both, before they make up their minds on light persuasion, or popular grounds, to study the opinion, and weigh the arguments of those, whose lives have been conversant in, and whose abilities devoted to, the commerce and legislation of so vast an Empire.

He has added, in an Appendix, the Petition of the East India Company; and a Report of the Committee of Correspondence, so frequently alluded to in the Debates—a Report, whose perspicuity of arrangement, and soundness of reasoning, cannot fail to convince the judgment of all those who are unbiassed and independent.

A Table of Contents, with the names of all the Speakers in the several Days' Debates, is also added.





## PROCEEDINGS, &c.

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EAST-INDIA HOUSE, *February 17, 1813.*

THE Minutes of the last Court having been read—

*Sir Hugh Inglis* (the Chairman) opened the proceedings by stating,—he had to inform the Proprietors, that the present Court was summoned to take into consideration a *Petition* which was prepared to be laid before Parliament *for the renewal of the Company's Charter*; which, with their permission, should be immediately read to them.

The *Petition* (for which see Appendix) having been read ;

*Sir Hugh Inglis*, in continuation, observed, that the Court having heard the *Petition* read, he need not state to them that it was one of no common importance. On the fate of that *Petition* depended *their* dearest interests—the multifarious interests of different bodies connected with the city of London, the river Thames, and all the

adjacent country—the prosperity and good government of the Company's territories in India—the happiness of millions of persons committed to their charge in that country—and, “though last, not least,” the security of the immense revenue collected in England, through the Indian Commerce, as now carried on;—for if, by the proposed alteration, any great change were to be effected in that revenue, there could be no doubt, that the general welfare of the whole country would be much impaired by it.—(*Hear ! hear !*) Having stated this, and the Petition having been read to the Court, he would merely observe, that it was scarcely possible for gentlemen to carry the whole of its contents in their minds, from *one* reading.—(*Hear ! hear !*) He should, therefore, submit to the Court, if they were anxious to come to a decision that day, to have the petition read over again.—(*Hear ! hear !*) It was not the wish of the Court of Directors to proceed precipitately on this great question; but, at the same time, they felt that delay was not desirable. They were expected to come forward with their cause speedily. He hoped it was a good one.—(*Hear ! hear !*)—and he believed the more generally the state of that cause was known, on a higher and more elevated ground would the Company stand in public estimation.—(*Hear ! hear !*) It rested

with the Court, either to come to a decision immediately, or to express their wishes for a farther delay. If they should prefer delay, he hoped it would not be for any considerable time.

There was only one point more connected with the Petition that had just been read, which he would touch upon before he sat down: certain blanks were left for the amount of bonds paid off by the Company, the reason for which was, that as the sums were fluctuating every day, the amount could not be inserted correctly till the day when the Petition should be presented to Parliament. He had to observe on this subject, that the Company were authorised by law to raise £7,000,000 by bonds; but, from circumstances, which must be evident to every gentleman in that Court, those bonds had been coming in of late more rapidly than the Company had any reason to expect; or than would have been the case, under more favourable circumstances. It might, however, be satisfactory for the Court to know how the bonds stood at present. There were outstanding against the Company, bonds to the amount of £5,441,000 of the £7,000,000 they were allowed to raise. In conclusion, the Chairman observed, he should be very happy to hear the sentiments of any honourable Proprietor on the Petition.

Mr. *Rock* observed, that every person who had heard the Petition just read, must perceive at one glance, that the Court was assembled at an awful crisis. He would, therefore, ask, whether it was more proper to come to a decision then, or to postpone their determination to a future day. The subject was one of the utmost importance; the existence of the Company was at stake; and, in making up their minds, they ought to proceed with the most serious deliberation. For that purpose he thought a short delay was advisable. If, therefore, he proposed an adjournment to Monday or Tuesday next, he hoped it would not be considered too distant a period. Should it be the opinion of the gentlemen on the other side of the bar, that they ought to meet earlier, he should have no objection; but he trusted that the Court would avoid every thing that looked like precipitation. The honourable proprietor was proceeding to move "That the Court should adjourn to Tuesday next, to take the Petition into consideration," when

*Sir Hugh Inglis* suggested to him, not to move the adjournment of *the Court*, but of *the consideration of the Petition*, to another day; perhaps there were other communications, necessary to be then made to the Court.

Mr. *Rock* observed, that he did not mean to

interfere with any ulterior business which it might be thought proper to bring forward.

Mr. *Trower* said, he, for one, was ready to come to an immediate decision. The question had been long before the Court, and, as it had been maturely considered, he was of opinion, that they ought then to state their determination. The Petition which had been just read, it was true, differed considerably from that which it was formerly intended to present; but the alterations appeared to him to be most judicious, and were perfectly suited to the situation in which the Company were placed. But the subject matter of the petition was well understood; they long since knew the point to which they should be driven; and, therefore, nothing novel was contained in the petition. Like all the other papers which had proceeded from the Court of Directors, it was an able, enlightened, and comprehensive production.—(*Hear ! hear !*)—The subject had been so often discussed, that nothing new could be advanced upon it: the question had, indeed, been almost exhausted; and under such circumstances, it was with very great diffidence he trespassed on the attention of the Court, being aware of the difficulty of touching on any point which had not already been noticed. He thought, however, that the attention of the Court should



be called to their real situation, that they might see the necessity of making exertions, both collectively and individually, in support of their rights. At a former period, His Majesty's Ministers had come to an agreement with the Company, that certain points were to be given up as the basis of the renewal of their charter. The petition drawn up on this foundation was to receive the support of Ministers. Subsequently, however, they had called on the Court of Directors to agree to farther concessions : these concessions they considered hostile to the best interests of the Company ; and, therefore, they had resisted them. This had led to a rupture of the negotiation ; and they were then about to present themselves at the bar of the Legislature, unsupported by his Majesty's Ministers—depending solely on the expediency of the measure, and the justice of their cause. The difficult situation in which they were placed, in consequence, was obvious ; but he hoped that Parliament would not suffer this great Company to be sacrificed to a clamour set up by a few misjudging and interested individuals. That the Government of the country should support the delusion was astonishing ; that they should join in the cry could scarcely be believed ; but, such being the fact, it was the duty of the Court to oppose, with all their

strength, the parties who had risen up against them. They ought not to be surprised, nor intimidated, by the loudness or clamour of their enemies. A reference to their history would shew, that, at a former period, they were assailed by enemies equally loud and equally noisy. But, at that time, the firmness of the Company, backed by the wisdom of Parliament, was able to silence their adversaries, as he hoped they would now be able to silence the empty declamations of the advocates of the Outports.—(*Hear ! hear !*)—He wished not to speak disrespectfully of any set of men ; but he would call on the Court to look at their pamphlets, which contained neither fair argument nor sound reasoning ; but abounded in declamation without argument, and assertion without proof. Yet such were the models to which they were sent by His Majesty's Ministers, to learn the lessons of wisdom, and imbibe the maxims of prudence.—(*Hear ! hear !*)—In some of these pamphlets the history of the trade of the Portuguese with India was quoted as a proof that an unrestricted commerce with that Company might be carried on with success ; and as affording evidence that a chartered monopoly was unnecessary. Now admitting the fact that the trade of the Portuguese was an open one, he drew a very different inference from that which

the opponents of the Company thought proper to deduce. In his opinion, they ought to ascribe the destruction of the Portuguese power and fame in India, to the enormous excesses of individuals connected with the private trade ; which excesses and enormities would never have been committed had the trade been regulated by the wholesome superintendence of a Company.—(*Hear ! hear !*)—In that case, the natives would not have opened their arms to the Dutch to deliver them from those oppressions under which they suffered from the cupidity and avarice of those free adventurers.—(*Hear ! Hear !*)—Some persons had bolstered up their own sentiments, by quoting the authority of Dr. Adam Smith, who had expressed a decided opinion against the interests of the Company. Every thing which fell from that great man was entitled to respect ; but it should be recollected, that, since he wrote, a very essential alteration had taken place in the situation of the Company. At that time, they were, *politically*, of little importance ; but they were now, in that respect, of mighty moment.—(*Hear ! hear !*)—And the present question was more nearly connected with their *duties as sovereigns*, than their *privileges as merchants*.—(*Hear ! hear !*)—It did not, therefore, follow, because fifty years ago Dr. Smith, in a treatise on political economy, gave an opinion

adverse to the Company, that he should now, under circumstances entirely new, adhere to the same opinion.—(*Hear! hear!*)—But, even if it were otherwise, if it were deemed more proper to decide the question by a reference to authorities, than by the evidence of facts, the friends of the Company could adduce opinions in their favour, not merely of philosophers, but of statesmen, the greatest this country ever saw. Many of those opinions had already been mentioned; and he now wished to add to the list the name of the immortal Burke, whose opinion on this subject was entitled to greater weight, because it proceeded from one of the most determined and formidable enemies the Company ever had.—Speaking on Mr Fox's bill, he thus expressed himself — “ I feel an insuperable reluctance to lend my hand to destroy any established form of government, for a theory however perfect. — My experience teaches me nothing clear on this subject—I have known merchants with the sentiments and abilities of great statesmen, and I have seen persons in the situation of statesmen, with the characters and conceptions of pedlars.” (*Laughter.*) Mr. Burke went on to say, that no accidental circumstance, that nothing but the most imperious necessity should induce the Parliament to take the ma-

nagement of the affairs of India out of the Company's hands. (*Hear ! hear !*) Such was the opinion of that great man, at the very moment when he was shaking the foundation of their authority, by the thunders of his eloquence. (*Hear ! hear !*) A reference to what occurred at that period, would afford a very strong argument in favour of the present system. For if, when abuses were admitted to exist, which called for another hand to rectify—if, under circumstances, over which he would rather throw the veil of oblivion, than call them to the recollection of the Court—if, in such a state of things, it was not deemed expedient to strip the Company of their rights and privileges—with how much less propriety can such a measure now be advanced, when all parties concurred in bearing witness to the happiness and security of millions who are placed under their sway ! — (*Hear ! hear !*) It might, formerly, have been observed, with some degree of propriety, that whatever was the hazard of the experiment, the danger was such as called for it ; for it was to secure the liberty of the natives of India, who had a strong claim on humanity and justice. But now the arguments were all on the other side. The benefits held out were merely problematical and contingent, while the evils were certain and perma-

ment. (*Hear! hear!*) To the inhabitants of India it was a melancholy prospect, threatening to destroy that peaceful security, that happy tranquillity, which they had so long enjoyed under the mild and beneficent government of the Company. (*Hear! hear!*) What might they not fear from the influx of private adventurers, who would feel no sympathy for the inhabitants of those countries?—What might they not fear from men who would take advantage of the mild character of those people, to beggar them by extortion, and crush them to the earth by their cruelties?—The torrent of revolution would ultimately overwhelm, not only those who produced, but those who deprecated the evil. The country would at length rise in revenge against its oppressors; the innocent and the guilty would alike fall victims to the rage of the people, and the English, like the Portuguese, would be swept from the Peninsula. (*Hear! hear!*) Admitting, however, that there were good grounds for altering the system, no period could have been selected, for that purpose, more improper or more injudicious, than that which His Majesty's Ministers had chosen. They had not chosen it either with reference to the present state of the Country, or the affairs of the Company, but they had been influenced by a clamour out of doors.

That clamour appeared to have effected a very great alteration in their minds—it had occasioned them to turn their backs on their old faithful friends, the East-India Company. And it was to be hoped that the new light which they had discovered, would direct them in removing every monopoly of the rights of man.—Yet these were the Ministers, who made it their boast that they trod in the footsteps of the immortal Pitt !—Ministers, who, while they sympathised with the petitioners from the outports, had no sympathy for the religious feelings of millions of their fellow-subjects in Ireland.—Ministers who, while they advocated freedom of trade, were imposing an embargo on conscience ; who, while they deprecated a commercial monopoly, were supporting, with all their power, a monopoly of religion !  
(*Hear ! hear !*)

He had observed, that no period could be worse chosen for those innovations, and he called upon the Court to examine the truth of his statement. It was in the midst of one of the most extensive and distressing wars this country was ever engaged in—a war which had continued for twenty years—for he took no account of the short and feverish peace of 1801, which was a cessation of arms, but not of hostility—a war by which the East-India Company had suffered more than any other class of His



Majesty's subjects—not merely by the increased expenditure necessary for the protection of their trade, not merely by the diminution of that trade, but by wars carried on in India, for the benefit of the empire—which had exhausted their revenue, and left them burdened with debt!—Wars commenced not only contrary to their wish and to their instruction, but contrary to the spirit of their Charter. (*Hear! hear!*) At the same time, he meant not to quarrel with the motives which occasioned these wars, that were conducted with ability, and concluded with success. But, as they were prosecuted for national objects, the expense ought to have been defrayed out of the national purse. (*Hear! hear!*) Such was the period Ministers had selected for making this alteration—a period not of prosperity, but of distress—when the pressure upon their affairs was greater than at any former time. To complete the picture, let them call to mind the promises which were held out to them by the Charter of 1793—let the Court look at the items which were disposed of by a single dash of the pen.—Large annual payments to government—a guarantee fund of £12,000,000—immense profits to the Company—these were the sanguine expectations then cherished. But these phantoms of the imagination had vanished,

and they might now contrast their actual condition, loaded with a debt of £30,000,000, with these visionary promises. Having done this, it must be allowed, if ever there was a period when the Company had a right to complain of disappointed expectations, it was now—having suffered, and suffered severely, not from any fault of their own, but from those sacrifices which they had made for the good of their Country. And, on the other hand, if ever there was a period when the Company were entitled to the support and assistance of Parliament, if ever there was a period when they deserved to be protected against the clamours and encroachments of their enemies, and to have their privileges preserved to them entire, the present was that period.—(*Hear!*) From the Ministers who had selected such a time for innovation, who had joined in the general outcry against them—and called on them, imperatively, to make such extraordinary sacrifices, they could expect no assistance—but, from the wisdom of Parliament they might hope for every thing—on their justice they might rely—to them they might safely confide, not their own interests only, but the interests of millions, which were committed to their care—with these truths the Court were long acquainted, and, therefore, he saw no necessity

for putting off the debate. They had only now to rest their cause on the decision of Parliament—and to that tribunal their appeal should be made without delay.

Mr. *K. Smith* said, he was never more surprised than when he saw the hon. gentleman (Mr. Rock) rise to put off their decision till Monday or Tuesday. The petition he considered as one of the most masterly that was ever drawn up; and he was one of those who thought, that no delay should take place in presenting it; they would lose, instead of gaining ground. While they delayed, those who were opposed to them were making every possible exertion. At that moment, delegates from Scotland, England, and Ireland, were collecting all the interests they could, to destroy the rights and privileges of the Company; and the longer they were detained from going before Parliament, the more formidable did their enemies become. In his opinion, the Court were ready, at that moment, to come to a decision, and the sooner they did so the better.

Mr. *Impey* said, that, merely as an individual, he should be as ready to come to an immediate decision, as any person in that Court. It was a question which he and many others had so fully considered, that they were perfectly com-

petent to judge of it in all its bearings.—But still, there were two reasons which induced him to vote for a short adjournment. In the first place, it was not every gentleman in that Court who had paid the same attention to the subject, and to the Petition, as he, and perhaps some others, had done—to such gentlemen time ought to be allowed, that they might examine the various subjects it contains.—There was another consideration of still more importance, which had been urged on a former occasion—and that was, the way in which they ought to come before the public—if, immediately after reading so long a paper, without further reflection, they should agree to it, their enemies would say, and the public might think, the Company were influenced by no consideration but their own interest, they would appear to act with hurry and precipitation—without taking time to deliberate. Was it not better, he would ask, for the Company to create an opinion in their favour, by agreeing to the short adjournment which the hon. proprietor had moved? The delay to Monday or Tuesday could make very little difference to the Court; they could then come to a decision with more dignity, and their Petition would, consequently, have greater weight with Parliament itself.

Mr. *R. Jackson* said, as the proposition had not been seconded, he rose for the purpose of doing himself the honour of seconding the motion for adjourning the consideration of the Petition till Tuesday next.

Sir *Hugh Inglis* informed the Court, that there was another Petition to be laid before them, and it would be better, he thought, if, when it was read, the consideration of both should be adjourned to the same day.

The second Petition (for which see Appendix,) was then read.

Mr. *Hume*, in reference to certain remittances of bullion, mentioned in the Petition, inquired, whether they arose from the surplus revenue of last year, or were transmitted to answer bills drawn in India on this country?

Sir *Hugh Inglis* answered, that these remittances were not for bills drawn on this country; and he had the pleasure of stating, that the surplus revenue of India, for last year, was £1,500,000.—(*Hear! hear!*) There were two other petitions; but as they were mere matters of form, being petitions praying leave to present petitions, he did not think there was any necessity to read them then.

Mr. *Rock* then moved, that the consideration of this Petition, as well as the former, be adjourned to Tuesday next.

Mr. *Impey* said, that several of the proprietors were anxious to know when those papers were likely to be printed.

Sir *Hugh Inglis* observed, he had some doubt whether it was perfectly decorous to print petitions before they were presented to the House of Commons. They might, however, be read by persons coming to the India House. He wished to give them publicity as soon as possible. The more the first was considered, the more it would redound to the interest of the Company. The moment it was presented, it should be printed.

Mr. *R. Jackson* said, the grounds on which he was about to recommend the Court to adjourn the consideration of the Petition, had been anticipated by his hon. friend (Mr. *Impey*). One of them was, that, although others and himself had exercised no inconsiderable industry on the subjects connected with the Petitions, and although their minds might be perfectly made up on the question, yet there were many hon. Proprietors present, and many absent, who could not be expected to understand all the points that were touched upon. The Petition, as it appeared to him, contained three great propositions—first, the history of the Company,—next, the rights which they possessed,—and lastly, their

administration of those rights. These were the three greatest propositions that could well be devised on the subject—each of them was much reasoned upon—and, towards the latter part, a great number of statements in figures were introduced, which it was impossible for the human mind to follow and to understand with the mere assistance of a single reading. Therefore, he thought, it would not be candid to press an immediate decision on so important a document.

The other reason which influenced him, and which had also been anticipated by his honourable friend was, the situation in which they ought to appear before the country. Let the Court look to the situation in which it at present stood. They were not merely to confirm an act of the Directors, but they were expressly called upon to perform an act themselves. Lord Buckinghamshire had expressly desired, that the business in dispute should be referred to the whole of the Proprietors, in General Court assembled, and that the Directors should convey to Ministers the result. Consequently, this was not only in legal and formal *parlance*, the act of the Court, but was, in truth, the deliberate and digested act of the Proprietors. Now, it was not in human nature for any one to say (who had not made the subject his particular study), “I can sign my name



to this Petition—this body of reasoning—this allegation and assertion of right—this narrative of our history—this record of our claims, on no other ground than merely hearing it once read.”

However public he should desire the Petition to be made, in point of decorum he did not think it could be printed, until it had been laid before Parliament. He never understood, when petitions were to be presented to persons of high consideration, as those who composed the Legislature undoubtedly were, that it was quite respectful to print them. He would, therefore, recommend, merely as an addition, not as a formal amendment, to the motion, that copies of the Petition should be left at the India-House for the information of such Proprietors as chose to examine them; which would meet every fair object of publicity, without being at all indecorous.

He was extremely glad that the question which had been put by an honourable Proprietor (Mr. Hume) had called forth the answer which had been given to it; for, if he had gone away without some such explanation, a misapprehension might have taken place. It might be supposed that, having been disappointed in the profits of their trade, and all their hopes and expectations having evaporated, as another honourable

Proprietor (Mr. Trower) had observed, these circumstances formed the strongest ground for refusing them a renewal of their charter; and, therefore, to counteract any such idea, it was proper that the real state of the case should be known, and that the whole body of the public should be aware of the true situation of the Company. In reference to what had fallen from that honourable Proprietor on the subject of the disappointments said to have been experienced by the Company since 1793, he thought it necessary to observe, lest these statements should be urged against them by their enemies, that Lord Melville would have been justified in anticipating even greater advantages than he had looked forward to in that year. For the correctness of this assertion, he would appeal to an honourable gentleman (Mr. Hume) as ingenious as any of them in his calculations: their prospects at that time had been by no means too highly coloured; but they were clouded by a vast train of events over which no human power had any controul—for which no human wisdom could provide—events relating rather to their Country than to themselves. If they had been distressed by those events, they had at least the satisfaction of proving that they were the victims sacrificed to the general good of the country:—(*Hear! hear!*)—

and they might go away with this proud, this glorious consolation, that, however they might have suffered; however their interests might have been impaired; however just the sacrifices they had made (and incalculably great they were); still, in proportion to those sacrifices their Country had risen in glory, prosperity, and security.—(*Hear ! hear !*) This observation applied more particularly to the second Petition, because many persons, unacquainted with the circumstances, might deem it strange, that they who were applying for a renewal of their Charter, should also call for a fresh loan. This naked, abstract fact, unnoticed and unexplained, might operate against the Company. But as the fact really stood, as their revenue had been exhausted for national objects, no honourable man, no sound politician, could refrain from giving them that assistance which their exertions in the general cause of the empire rendered necessary. No person could support such a principle, unless he was prepared to say, that it was right and wise for the Dutch and Danes to be again placed in possession of those territories they formerly held in India—unless he was prepared to say, that the French should again possess that powerful footing which they had procured by intrigue, and which they would have held to the present hour, but for the expen-

diture of those sums which belonged to the Company, but which were applied to political purposes, in exterminating from the soil of India the enemies of the British empire. Surely, then; no man could refuse reimbursing them in these sums, unless, as he before observed, he was ready to admit, that the possessions of their enemies should be restored to them again. It would, in his opinion, be base and dishonest, and disgraceful, for any man to rise up in that Court, or elsewhere, to oppose such assistance being afforded to the East-India Company, except he meant to maintain, that the French, and the Dutch, and the Danes, should have their possessions given back to them, or that they ought never to have been dislodged from that country.—(*Hear! hear!*) In times so critical as these, when the reputation of the Company was attacked, when their existence was at stake, they ought not to permit any one fact, which might operate against the justice of their cause, to go forth unexplained or uncontradicted.—(*Hear! hear!*)

Mr. *Hume* said, when he took the liberty of putting a question to the honourable Chairman, it was not from any ignorance of the fact to which it referred, but he was anxious that the public should know it from official authority. He had reason to think that their most sanguine

expectations would be realized ; and, therefore, he wished to check the desponding opinion which had been promulgated by an honourable proprietor (Mr. Trower). That honourable gentleman would have the Court understand, that all their views had been disappointed, and all their hopes deceived. He (Mr. Hume) was of a contrary opinion. They were not to receive those facts merely as stated, but they were to examine the events by which they were occasioned. He therefore wished to weaken the impression which might be made by the honourable gentleman's arguments ; and to maintain, that the Company were not so much deceived and disappointed as he would lead the Court to believe. He thought that the fears expressed by the honourable gentleman of the dreadful effects which opening the trade would produce, contained the greatest libel on the Company's government in India that he had ever heard. It was impossible for a few petty adventurers to destroy the systematic order which the Company had established in India, and which he hoped would long flourish under their auspices. He had before said, and the assertion was founded on his own experience, that the present Government of India, admirably constituted, and ably administered as it was on all sides allowed to be, was sufficiently strong and powerful

to check any irregularities or disorders which, by possibility, could exist. The honourable gentleman had arraigned His Majesty's Ministers for bringing forward the question at the present moment; but he should have recollected, that it was the approaching expiration of their Charter, and not His Majesty's Ministers, which had rendered the consideration of the subject imperative. The Company went before Parliament because their situation rendered such a step necessary; but Ministers were not to blame, since the act was evidently that of the Company. He was anxious that it should not be thought that Ministers had selected this most unfortunate hour, as it had been termed; and he hoped the Court would not be carried away by the idea, that they had imposed an unnecessary trouble on themselves, since, in fact, it was a duty which had arisen from the circumstances of the case. With respect to the present being an unfavourable moment, he again differed from the honourable gentleman. For, if it were ever admitted that any change was necessary to be effected, surely this was the time: when India is in a state of profound repose,—when peace and quietness pervaded every part of those vast territories—when a surplus revenue, to a considerable amount, is about to be remitted—such a period was more peculiarly adapted for mak-

ing an alteration, than any other which had occurred from the commencement of the Charter to the present hour. He was anxious to have seconded the motion for adjournment, not on account of any of the reasons which had been assigned—but because he thought the first Petition contained one or two positions, which were at variance with each other, and ought, therefore, to be removed. The claim of the Company was as good and as just as any that had ever been laid before the Legislature, and he had no doubt that it would receive all the attention which its importance demanded. But he thought they should not be in such a hurry to make their request, as, by their precipitation, to refuse any thing, if they were not successful in obtaining the primary object. They called on the Legislature to grant them all that was consistent with their rights, and which was necessary for the good government of India; but, in a subsequent grant, having, in the first instance, thrown themselves on the wisdom and justice of Parliament, there were one or two words which, by some persons, might be considered as inconsistent with the general prayer of the Petition. And, here, he thought it right that he should avow the motives by which he was actuated. He had been called an enemy to the Company, but he denied the



accusation—his anxiety and his object were, to continue the prosperity of the Company—to increase their wealth—and to add to their security.—every thing he had done, every thing he had said, had that view only—however unfortunate he was in the interpretation which had been put upon his conduct.—He thought the following sentence in the Petition was objectionable, and should be altered—“ That it would be *unjustifiable* in the Company to become parties to any system, which, after mature consideration, they had the best founded reasons for believing would be an illusion.” Now, having thrown themselves on the justice of Parliament, he did not think that they ought to say, they would refuse any thing.—He was of opinion, that, while they endeavoured to get all they could, they should not say “ *no* ” to any thing that was offered—*(Laughter)* He hoped, therefore, that time would be given to gentlemen to consider whether the Petition was consistent throughout; and, if it should appear, that the Company refused any thing, he trusted the paragraph containing such refusal, would be excluded.

Sir *Hugh Inglis* requested Mr. Hume to read the words again, to which he objected—Mr. Hume complied, observing, that it had been his intention to have asked for information on the

subject which was particularly alluded to in that passage; but he had waved his original design, in consequence of the motion for an adjournment.

Mr. *Pattison* (a Director) begged leave to offer a few words on a very important and a very curious point—the words which the hon. gent. had read did not exist in the Petition—(*Hear! hear!*) Now, though he had not found them there, it was evident he must have found them somewhere—the sentence which he read was—“That it would be *unjustifiable* in the Company to become parties to any system, which, after mature consideration, they had the best founded reasons for believing would be an illusion.” He had brought forward the term *unjustifiable*, which was not contained in the wording of the Petition—now it was very remarkable, that this identical paragraph, on which the hon. Proprietor had commented, was the subject of considerable discussion in the Court of Directors—(*Hear! hear!*)—and it was still more extraordinary that the word *unjustifiable* did originally constitute a part of it—(*Hear! hear!*)—But the good sense of the Court operated to expunge that word, and the sentence was put in another shape,—more palatable to the Proprietors,—more respectful to the Hon. House before which the Petition was to be

laid—and less likely to be misunderstood—he would, therefore, inquire of the hon. Proprietor from what source he obtained his information—for, by some means or other he must have seen the Petition before it was amended—the Petition was considered a sort of secret in the Court of Directors, and by no means a matter of public notoriety. The hon. Proprietor appeared to have exerted the same industry with which he had before ineffectually endeavoured to enlighten the Court, to find out what?—That which did not now exist in the Petition—he should therefore now move, that the sentence be read—it would be found in an improved and modified state, and not subject to the objection which the hon. Proprietor had advanced.

The passage, which ran thus, was then read: “Your petitioners submit, that they *would not be justified*, in becoming parties to any system,” &c.

Mr. Hume contended, that the paragraph was stronger than he had imagined; inasmuch as the *negative* of a *positive verb*, was more powerful than the *affirmative* of an *adjective*.—He did not found his objection on any particular word—but he asked, did not the whole sentence tend to the refusal of something?—that was the whole jut of his argument. As to the inquiry of the hon. Director, with respect to the source from whence he

derived his information, he must be aware, that it would be a breach of that good faith which he seemed to prize so much himself, if he (Mr. Hume) in answer to a public question, should divulge a private communication—he might, however, without any breach of confidence, observe, that perhaps the information came from the hon. Director himself.

Mr. *Pattison* requested the hon. gent. to repeat the sentence with which he had concluded.

Mr. *Hume* meant to say, that, from the quarter through which he had received his intelligence, it was not impossible, but it might have originally proceeded from the hon. gent. himself.

Mr. *Pattison* requested the hon. Chairman to support him through this very *paradoxical* statement.

The hon. gent. said, “it was not impossible but the information might have been received through him,” (Mr. *Pattison*)—now, as he had never known the hon. gent.; as he had never seen him, except in that Court, when he occupied their attention for about seven hours; as he had never particularly noticed him, except once, when he felt it his duty to call him to order; he thought it was highly indecorous, that he should impute to him any participation in this singular transaction. It was a perfect *paradox*; and, after

having heard so many from the hon. gentleman, he congratulated him on this last one, which was a *climax*.—(*Laughter.*)

Hon. Mr. *Elphinstone* spoke to order.—The subject before the Court was of the utmost importance, and gentlemen ought to confine themselves to it.

Mr. *Hume* appealed to the Court, whether any thing irregular which had passed, was not occasioned by the conduct of the hon. gent.—(Mr. *Pattison*).

Sir *Hugh Inglis* said, that the hon. Proprietor (Mr. *Hume*) had, by implication, thrown out a hint, that it was not impossible that his information had come from his (Sir H. Inglis's) hon. friend—and it was right that he should justify himself from the imputation—he (Sir H. Inglis) did not believe that the information did come from that gent. ; but from the same quarter which had afforded the hon. Proprietor (Mr. *Hume*) those particulars which he had detailed to the Court on a former day.

Mr. *Howarth* (M. P.) said, that the present was one of the most interesting subjects that could possibly come under their consideration; and he felt that it was utterly impossible, from one short reading of that Petition, which contained not only matter important to their inter-

ests, but to the general interests of the Country, for any individual to agree immediately in the propriety of all its parts. He was sorry to observe, that an hon. Proprietor (Mr. Trower) in the course of a speech, which certainly displayed great eloquence, had introduced topics which he thought had better been avoided—he knew no purpose which such language, levelled at His Majesty's Ministers, could answer, except to excite greater opposition against the Company, than they at present experienced—but he felt convinced, that neither the public clamours without doors, nor the clamours within, would influence the government in the conclusion to which they would ultimately come—it was his firm hope and belief, that the question would be decided, not according to the selfish interests of any body of men, but on the general principles of national good—another hon. Proprietor (Mr. Smith) had desired them to come to a speedy decision, lest their enemies should make head against them—but he, on the contrary, would say—“if your cause be good, call on your enemies to bring forward all their force—let them advance with all their powers—let them make their utmost efforts—that, in the end, you may prove the justice of your claims superior to all the opposition of your adversaries.”—(*Hear ! hear !*)—He merely rose

to make his claim, like other Proprietors, to have a due time allowed for consideration, on one of the most important questions that ever was agitated before them—the Petition was extremely complete in its nature, and, therefore, he trusted sufficient delay would be granted for a proper examination of it. This was more regular, and would have a much better effect, than if they came to a premature decision.

Sir *Hugh Inglis* then put the question, “that the farther consideration of the Petitions be adjourned till Tuesday next ;” at the same time, he thought it was but justice to the gentlemen behind the bar, to state, that they had considered the subject maturely, and there was no hesitation on their parts to come to a decision then ; in deference, however, to the opinions of the Proprietors, they readily agreed to the proposed delay.

The motion was then agreed to.

Sir *Hugh Inglis* next observed, that the Court would please to recollect, that, when the letter from the Earl of Buckinghamshire was read on a former day, that nobleman referred the Company to the petitions which had been laid on the table of the House of Commons. In consequence of this reference the Committee of Correspondence had taken the substance of those petitions into their consideration, and had come to a report on



the subject—which report had met with the unanimous approbation of the Court of Directors. He might venture to speak of that report, not being one of the parties who drew it up, as a very able and luminous production. If the Court pleased, the letter which accompanied the report to the Earl of Buckinghamshire, and his answer to it, should be then read. As the report itself was of great length, and as it was now in the press, and would be ready for delivery on the following day, perhaps the Court would allow it to be read short.

The letters referred to, were then read at length, and the title of the report of the Committee of Correspondence, as was suggested by the hon. Chairman, was also read—(for which documents, see Appendix)—after which the Court adjourned to Friday, February 23.

#### FRIDAY, *February 23*, 1813.

The Minutes of the last Court having been read by the Clerk,

The Chairman (*Sir Hugh Inglis*) stated to the Proprietors that they were assembled to take into further consideration the petition agreed to by

the last Court. He had to inform them that there had been several alterations made in the Petition, which, the Directors hoped, would meet with their approbation. Those alterations were open to their arguments and suggestions, as they concerned a subject of such great and vital importance to their interests. He thought the Petition had better be read as it now stood, and the alterations would be pointed out as they occurred.

The Petition was then read; and before the alterations made in it, had been stated to the Court,

Mr. *Abel Chapman* rose. He said that the prayer of that Petition comprehended matter of so much importance to the Company and the empire at large, he hoped he might stand excused if he was not content to give a silent vote. The nature and importance of our possessions in India were particularly well known, not only to the gentlemen employed in the administration of its affairs—not only in earlier but in later times, but also to the honourable Proprietor (Mr. Hume) who had laid before the Proprietors his sentiments on the importance and the high advantages derived to this country from the present mode of directing the East-India establishment; they were, also, as well known to the natural enemies of this

country, if he might so call them, the French nation; that nation had frequently betrayed both envy and admiration at the value and importance of those possessions as they affected the affairs and the interests of England. On a particular occasion, when Lord Malmesbury was applied to by the French ambassador for the purpose of regulating some plans for the peace of Europe, that noble lord told the French minister it was impossible that Europe could enjoy peace whilst the French maintained possession of Holland, the Low Countries, and other territories, not the natural possession of that country. The answer his lordship obtained from that plenipotentiary was "my Lord, your empire in the East is so well governed and so admirably regulated that I must take the liberty of saying that I never saw a system of government established in the colonies of any nation at once so adapted for its own preservation and the advantage of the mother country."

So thoroughly did he (Mr. Chapman) agree in the justice of that observation of the French ambassador, that he thought it was impossible to make *any* alteration in the establishments of the India Company, without overturning the whole system. He would never consent that a single brick of the ancient and venerable fabrick,

which had been raised by them at an expense of so much blood and treasure, should be removed ; because he was persuaded such a breach would thereby be made in its present sound structure, as it would be impossible ever to repair. He thought that that system which had answered all the purposes ever intended by it, and exceeded those ever hoped from it, ought to be preserved and maintained in every particle ; convinced as he was that any alteration in the old system would not only be destructive of the British empire in the East, but give birth to a train of evil consequences which it would be impossible for this country, with all the exertion of its wisdom and of its energy, to avert. It was a gratifying circumstance to reflect upon, that whilst Europe was ravaged with war, and all her nations shaken almost to the centre, the British empire in the East enjoyed a perfect tranquillity ; and this by the wisdom and sound policy of those who administered her affairs, whilst those advantages cost the mother country nothing to acquire or to maintain. When he beheld the vast importance of those services which the India Company had performed for the benefit of Great Britain, by their wise administration, he was impressed with admiration and wonder ; and he could not but entertain a confident hope that the English go-

vernment would not adopt any measure which would disappoint the Company of those strong claims upon its justice and its gratitude. By the wise administration established in India, the Company had secured a revenue to this country, the mention of which, a few days ago, he confessed excited in his mind a considerable degree of astonishment. They had secured an annual surplus revenue to the British empire of £1,500,000 sterling.

Considering, therefore, the advantages secured by the Company to the British Empire—considering how the administration of their affairs had been conducted, so as to meet with the approbation, not only of our own government, but even of foreign nations;—and considering the testimony even of those who appeared to be the enemies of the Company, all of which were in favour of the proposition he contended for, surely it would be highly impolitic for the Court to give its sanction not only as Proprietors of East-India stock, but as Englishmen, to *any* system which should tend to overturn so noble a fabric as that established by the East-India Company. For his own part, if the opening of the outports, as a measure of policy on the part of government, should be carried into execution, he was firmly persuaded that a more destructive measure could

not be resolved upon, not only as it related to the welfare of this country, but as it affected the security and the interests of the nation at large; and he was persuaded, if that measure were passed into a law, the security of India was not worth many years' purchase.—(*Hear! hear! hear!*) The Court and every man knew very well, that India was a remote part of the world. Revolutions might take place; counter-revolutions might follow; and the whole empire might be shaken to its centre, before even intelligence could be received in this country of what was passing: and the time was not very remote when this country was not a little alarmed as to the then existing state of affairs in India. We were very well assured that there was a powerful French faction in India, ready and willing to raise disaffection and foment faction; and eager to seize the first opportunity to ignite that inflammable feeling which their machinations had so industriously created. We all knew, from experience, that Buonaparte attempted to assail India, by the way of Egypt: nor was that a new idea; for he had borrowed it from Louis XIV. Now, if any commotion was to take place in India, could any man doubt that Buonaparte, as the governor of France, would be very ready to add fuel to the flame, and give

every succour in his power, either by way of Egypt or Persia? Were we not to look to such calamities? Were we not to look forward, anticipate, and provide against evils which common sense would tell us, must result from the dissolution of that unity in the Company's affairs, and that well-tempered dependance upon the British Crown? Were we not to derive wisdom from past experience, and avoid those rocks which had brought upon this country so many unfortunate consequences? If the trade to India—and if the government of the East-India Company was to be dissolved,—would any reasonable man hope, that an empire so large, and so distant from the mother-country, would not avail herself of the first pretext to shake off the British yoke? These, however, were not consequences that could ever be expected to follow, so long as the East-India Company was kept compact within itself;—so long as that wise system they established, could be maintained by their policy and their exertions, and so long as the Company could secure to the British government a ready and prompt allegiance to its crown and imperial dignity. It would indeed be blindness and folly if we were not to benefit a little by the dear-bought experience this country had acquired in somewhat similar occasions. For his own part,



he thought the short and simple interpretation of a request to open the trade to India was at once to deprive the India Company of all her political power; to tear asunder all those bonds by which the Empire in the East was secured to the British Crown; and, in short, to renew the old business of America. Surely, if these consequences were only to be *risked* by granting the prayer of the petitions of those who sought to encroach upon the privileges of the India Company;—if there was even only the *chance* of losing those valuable possessions, we should be equally unwise and unjust in hazarding such an experiment. It was in the memory of men now living, and, in fact, he himself knew the honourable officer who sat at the Board of Trade with himself, when the *Virginia* trade was settled, he meant General Oglethorpe. It was very well known that the trade to America for the purpose of bringing home to England the commodities of Virginia, was not carried on by British built ships, but by ships built in America. There were Virginia merchants now living who, as well as himself, remembered the whole of the Tobacco coming from Virginia in Virginia ships, and these ships were navigated, not by British seamen, but by native Americans; nor were British artificers employed in the construction of those vessels.

Now *that*, he feared, was the system that would be followed, in case of any alteration in the present trade to India; and he would venture to say, that, if the Outports were opened, if such should be the determination of the Legislature, the trade would not be carried on by the ships of those ports, but by ships built in India, manned by natives of the country, and sent to ports different from those established by Act of Parliament. But he was persuaded that these important considerations would be seriously attended to by the government of the country, and he could not believe that the Parliament of the United Kingdom would, in its wisdom, entertain a proposition so pregnant with injury to the interests of the British empire. He had been told, within a few days past, what indeed he was not ignorant of before, that the Ministers of our country, from the nature of the Constitution, were obliged to hear all parties, and to hear objections and petitions, from whatsoever quarter they came. He did not question the liberality and the justice of that proposition: on the contrary, he hoped that all parties would be heard with that patience and attention which was the characteristic of the British Legislature; but at the same time, flattering himself that the Legislature would consider this question in the point of view in which

it had been considered by this Court, he could not but be sorry that those gentlemen who had determined to leave their homes, and come up to London upon a subject of so much importance, to see their favourite measure carried into execution, had done so without considering, that the safety of the whole empire was involved in a compliance with their wishes. There were reasons which moved him to a conviction of the impolicy, and even the madness of such a measure; and being so impressed he could not content himself with a silent vote. Experience persuaded him, that if the shipping interest of India was properly attended to, so as to be connected with this country, to be manned by British seamen, and to become *British* in every respect, this country never could want a naval force amply competent to enable her to carry on the great undertakings in which she was necessarily engaged. Under such regulations they would add strength and solidity to the power of the British arms. But if these ships employed in the Indian trade were suffered to come from India to our outports with *native* seamen, the object of the measure under consideration would not be *British*, and therefore ought not to be carried into a law.—(Hear! hear!)—He begged pardon for having trespassed so long

upon the attention of the Court, and he besought their indulgence, not only as he felt the importance of the subject, but as he was little in the habit of public speaking. Indeed he was more indebted to their considerate feeling towards him, because this question had been argued and discussed by men of the first rate abilities—by many honourable and learned gentlemen now in his eye; and as they had said so much, and that so well, he could not flatter himself with the hope of saying any thing worthy the particular attention of the Court.—(*Hear! hear!*)—But as far as related to the great bearing of the question, his sentiments upon it were contained in a very short sentence, which was, “that he was persuaded the security of India would be lost to the mother country if any alteration was adopted in the government of Indian affairs.” He would not dwell upon a more enlarged exposition of the reasons he had for entertaining such an opinion; persuaded, however, he was, that all the commercial advantages which this country enjoyed by the present system of government in India would be utterly lost; and any attempt to seek larger advantages by a more extended commerce than now held with India, would be risking the certainty of a *permanent*, for the mere chance of a *temporary* benefit. *Temporary* he called it; be-

because he was afraid, for the reasons he had stated, the British power in that distant quarter of the world, would be lost. If a communication to India for the private merchants was opened, in proportion as that communication was widened, in the same proportion would the security of our India possessions become precarious. The reason why we owed our present security in that country to the India Company was obviously, because the communication between Great Britain and India was carried on through the Company, and because it could not be carried on by any other legal means. In that view of the question, he begged leave to say, that it was not for the Court of Proprietors to facilitate the progress of Indian independence, which would be the inevitable consequence if they were to lend their countenance to any alteration in the present system. They ought to guard, and *jealously* guard, against any disobedience, to the sovereignty of this country in India—they ought to be watchful of a strict obedience to the laws enacted under the protection and countenance of the British Government. If the Americans had not become a mercantile people, which gave occasion to their having a mercantile navy; and if that mercantile navy had not been turned into a *political* navy, which was done, and which nothing could pre-

vent, we should not this day have to deplore the loss of those settlements, nor would America possess that political independence which she is now able to exert against the parent country. He therefore thought that the safety of the British empire in India depended upon the East-India Company's remaining *compact* and *united* within itself, as it had done for centuries; and he again said, that if the British legislature could consent to lay open the trade in the manner now sought by the petitioners to Parliament, they would annihilate, not only the commerce, but the politics of the British empire in India. Beside the revenue which the India Company ordinarily collected, they had a surplus revenue, notwithstanding the increasing difficulties which they had to encounter, of £1,500,000. In addition to these advantages, they had established a nursery of seamen, which was the great bulwark of the state; and also, that they had a net revenue of £500,000 per annum. Were not these objects worthy the attention of the British legislature? Were they not too important to lose without a *struggle* at least for their security. Firmly was he persuaded, that if the government laid the *whole* of the trade open they would lose the *whole*: beside which, they would lose India in a very short time; and, for his own part, he would give but a very few years



purchase for it. It was on that principle, and not with a view to any private advantages, that the East-India Proprietors could derive from the continuance of the trade to India, that he opposed any alteration in the system. Even Mr. Adam Smith, with all his ability, could not judge of the calculations of the trade and commerce of the East-India Company with India. But *they* knew from experience what the system of affairs in India was—*they* knew the advantages of it to the British nation; and, in the prayer of the Company's Petition to Parliament, it was only desired that the Legislature would let the system remain as it now stood, with such alterations as they in their wisdom thought proper to make, with respect to *the regulation of the trade*, without losing sight of the great object at stake. It was by no means a hazardous statement for him to make, when he asserted that the moment an alteration took place in the East-India government, from that moment that Empire would be lost to the mother country. For, in speaking of the French nation, we were all aware with what a jealous eye they looked at our extensive empire in the East; and we all knew how anxious the tyrant of France would be to participate in that glorious system established by this country in India, and acquire dominion in that valuable territory. Every one knew that “ships,



"colonies, and commerce," were what the French wanted; and he was persuaded, from the experience this country had had of the designs of that usurper, if it were possible for this country to set *toe to toe* with him, he would go back to his ancient limits, if we would give him a firm footing in India. It was in this point of view, therefore, that he thought this country ought to look with a jealous eye to the security of India; a measure which could only be permanently effected by the continuance of the present system of government in that country, but which, he feared, would be immediately risked by an opposite line of conduct. Could it be said that this was a matter of mere *commercial* arrangement when, in fact, it concerned the policy, the commerce, and all the real interests of the country? He affirmed that the commercial and political relations of the East-India Company were so intimately united and interwoven with each other, that it was impossible to shake the one without losing the other.—*Hear! hear!*) The liberty he had thus taken of delivering his sentiments at so much length, he hoped would be excused. He felt that an apology was due to the Court; but he was so deeply impressed with the importance of the question, he could not help yielding to the persuasion, that he ought not to give a silent vote. There was, how-

ever, one other observation with which he would trouble the Court, because he thought it was of importance, when coupled with the more important arguments upon this subject. The East-India Company had a population in India, at this time, of 20,000 inhabitants. Every one who knew India, knew that a very free and unrestrained intercourse took place between the sexes. The consequence was, that the population multiplied in a surprising degree; and hence it followed, that every spring, the schools, in and round London, were filled with the youth of that country, who were brought to England to receive their education. When these young people went back, they called themselves Englishmen, and claimed all the privileges of British subjects. With such opinions and notions as these, was it too much to say, that these men, so educated, would in a little time feel themselves disposed to entertain the same sentiments as the Americans? At least, with the woe-ful experience we had had of the consequence of sentiments of the same kind in that country, we ought to avoid every step that might tend to realize such alarms for the safety of our East-Indian possessions—we ought to bear in prospect the example of America—and we ought, with every barrier in our power, to avert a similar catastrophe in the East. It was matter of great satisfaction

to him, that this important subject was not to be decided hastily and unadvisedly. This was not the last occasion upon which the claims of the East-India Company would be discussed ; and he anticipated with confidence, that the wisdom of Parliament would not only find it *politic* but *just*, to confirm those claims to those who had so long approved themselves worthy of their trust. Viewing, therefore, with jealousy, the attempts made to counteract the calls of justice and of gratitude, he would certainly vote for the prayer of the Petition.—(*Hear ! hear !*)

Mr. *Hoare* said he by no means wished to trespass upon the attention of the Court ; but he submitted, under the correction of the chair, that the course of the proceedings this day was hitherto rather irregular. The Court was informed from the Chair, that the Petition adopted by the last Court had undergone some alterations. The Petition having, as he apprehended, been read for the purpose of having those alterations pointed out ; but that not having been yet done, he thought the honourable Proprietor who spoke last was a little irregular in delivering his sentiments before any question was delivered from the Chair, and before the proper subject of this day's discussion was stated to the Court. He submitted, therefore, that it would have been more regular for the ho-

nourable Proprietor to have waited until the alterations were read, and the question put thereupon from the Chair.

Mr. *Abel Chapman* said he thought this was an adjourned debate.

Mr. *Hoare* suggested, that the Petition which had just been read having been discussed and approved of at the last Court, there could be no new subject of debate before the Court until the alterations were read. It would be perfectly proper for the honourable Proprietor to deliver his sentiments upon the amendments, when the question should be put; but not having been put, he would take the liberty of saying that the more regular course would be to wait for the question.

The *Chairman* said he certainly did state, as the honourable Proprietor, who spoke last, had mentioned, that there were some alterations made in the Petition since the last Court. He had now, however, to observe, that the alterations were inconsequential as to the great points in agitation, and were rather of a clerical nature. The most material one would now be read.

Mr. *Smith* (Solicitor to the Company) then stated, that the alterations made in the Petition were of a trifling nature, and that the main alteration was in that paragraph of the Petition which respected the expences of the Company in its mili-

tary operations and its forces in India. This was the only material one in the Petition.

The *Chairman* insisted, that the alteration now stated would be deemed by the Court to be an improvement in the Petition ; because it stated a fact which was of considerable importance, and noted what they (the proprietors) had given up for national purposes. The question he would therefore put was, "that this alteration stand part of this Petition."

Mr. *Hume* then rose ; concurring, as he certainly did, in the greatest part of the prayer of the Petition which had been just read, he should be extremely sorry to detain the Court unnecessarily on the present occasion ; but as he was convinced that it would be the wish, as well of those within the bar, as of those without the bar, that a Petition of so much importance to the general interests, not only of the Company but of the public, should go from hence as perfect as it could be made, he hoped the Court would excuse him for a few moments, whilst he stated what appeared to him to require some further consideration, and which he thought might be attended with good effects if altered as he should propose. After recapitulating the history of the Company from the earliest period of its establishment down to the present moment, which he

thought was perfectly right and just, the words of the Petition were these: "That your Petitioners are ready to become parties to any arrangement which shall be consistent with the rights of your Petitioners, and the security of British India."—No words, he thought, could be more proper than those used in that part of the Petition, because it was leaving to the justice of the Legislature (which, indeed, he ventured before to suggest) every thing that might be useful and advantageous to the country, consistent with the rights of both parties. Anxious, therefore, that that should stand as part of the Petition, he begged leave to call the attention of the Court to the two subsequent paragraphs. The first\* was that which the Court stated, that the only resources which

\* To understand the honourable gentleman's allusion correctly, it will be necessary to quote the whole paragraph alluded to, from the Petition itself.

"Your Petitioners ask not for an *exclusive trade* upon the narrow principles of monopoly for the mere purpose of commercial gain. They have under their care interests of a more extended and liberal nature, which it is their duty to attend to. Your Petitioners are ready to become parties to any arrangements which shall be consistent with the rights of your Petitioners, and the security of British India, and which will not deprive your Petitioners of the means of fulfilling their pecuniary engagements with the public or individuals: or the performance of the functions which may be continued or allotted to them."



the Company could depend upon with a view of paying the interests of their debts, consisted merely of their profits in trade. Now he submitted to the consideration of the Court whether the observation of the honourable Chairman at the last meeting, "that there was a surplus revenue of one million and a half per annum, and that revenue might be expected to increase," was at all consistent with the statement in the Petition, that the resources of the Company depended only upon its profits in trade. He did not like this sort of statement, when the Court had the means of putting the matter out of all doubt; because it was calculated to mislead the world into a belief that the Company had nothing to depend upon but their profits in trade. This was certainly an objection which he would wish to have answered or obviated. The second point to which he alluded as objectionable in the Petition, and which he hoped would be altered or left out, was that paragraph wherein the Court stated, "your Petitioners submit, that they would not be justified in becoming parties to any system which, on consideration, should appear to them likely to prove an illusion." Now, he certainly expected that this would have been one of the alterations made in the Petition, but he was sorry to find that these words were still continued.



The *Chairman* here begged to state a very few words upon the subject of the objection taken to this part of the Petition by the honourable Proprietor. He believed, that with respect to those words now alluded to, the Court of Directors had no very great desire themselves to retain them in the Petition, if it should be the *wish of the Proprietors* themselves, to have them omitted. From what had passed, in the Court of Directors, he believed he was warranted in saying this, but in order to their being removed he apprehended it could only be done by an expressed resolution of the Court of Proprietors.

Mr. *Hume* resumed. He said, he was extremely unwilling to detain the Court unnecessarily ; but he trusted it would appear to them that the expressions used in that part of the Petition did put the Court in a very different situation from that which they ought to maintain on this important occasion ; and that whatever might be the result of the investigation of the Legislature into this subject, the Court having pledged themselves to nothing, he was convinced that nothing, which they had the power to adopt as well as to reject, would be submitted to them by the Legislature. But here the Petition appeared to be begging conclusions ; and he would here, by the way, take the liberty of asking, what it was the

Court meant by "their not becoming parties to any system which, upon consideration, should appear to them an illusion?" He wished to know what was that system of illusion which the Petition spoke of, and to which the Company would not become a party? Because he thought it involved a question of very great difficulty and invidious meaning, and feeling that objections might be taken to it by those who were not the friends of the Company, he would suggest the expediency of leaving it out, with a view to avoid all kinds of cavil on the part of those to whom the Petition might be referred. There was likewise another part of the Petition which he thought was at variance with the statutes, which gave the East India Company a right to their present Charter. The words of the Petition to which he alluded were these: "Your Petitioners humbly submit that it cannot be contended that any persons can have a right, except, with the consent of your Petitioners, to use the settlements, factories, and seats of trade in India, and so forth." Now, if the enactments of the 32d of Geo. II. were correct, they went to this, "that on the termination of the Company's exclusive right to trade with India, the subjects of His Majesty should have a right to trade in common with others of his subjects to India." These were the words of the

statute; and if the subjects of His Majesty were to have the right to trade in common to India after the expiration of the Company's Charter, although the right to trade exclusively was continued to the Company, still the ultimate right remained in the whole body of the British people. He therefore could not help considering that the retention of these words was impolitic, because it was advisable to obviate every possible source of adverse opinion upon this subject, when it came to be discussed elsewhere. Besides this precaution, as it respected the present objection, might be very safely taken, as it did appear to him that the words were quite unnecessary.

Another part of the Petition he thought required some explanation, and he trusted, in taking this exception to the Petition, the Court would be satisfied that his sole object in at present troubling them, was to remove all obstacles to an unanimity of sentiment upon this great question. He was not aware of any document before the public upon which it could be shewn that the statement in page 17 of the Petition, "that the net produce by trade, exclusive of all collateral objects and payments of dividends amounting to six millions and odd thousands pounds," was correct. This statement of so enormous a sum might give rise to considerable objections as to

its truth, unless it was sustained by some unquestionable documents; because, by the documents which had been laid before the public in 1810, and subsequent to that period, the nett produce of the Company's trade, exclusive of the usual deductions, did not exceed £1,535,308. Instead of the statement in the Petition being confined to any thing like that sum, the Petition roundly asserted that the nett produce of their trade is considerably upwards of £6,000,000, making the enormous surplus, over and above the last accounts laid before the public, to amount to upwards of four millions. Now, for his own part, he was unable to account for this extraordinary increase; and he should be happy to have some explanation upon the subject, unintelligible as it was at present; because he thought that whatever the Court asserted in the Petition, they ought to be prepared to prove and testify by the most satisfactory evidence. Now with a view of shewing how necessary it was for the Court to be on its guard against stating what it would not be able to prove, he would take the liberty of producing part of the VIIIth Report, which had been published a few days before; he meant the Report of the Secret Committee of Correspondence. It was not now necessary for him to enter into a particular investigation of the contents of

that report, or to point out those facts stated in it, which he conceived could not be supported; but he would take *one fact* as an instance, to shew the propriety of the observation he had made, which he was convinced the Court would admit as a fact that was extremely strong. The circumstance he alluded to was contained under the third head of objections which had been made against the Renewal of the Company's Charter. The Committee had stated, under the third head of those objections, "that, notwithstanding the increase of the Company's territories, their trade has decreased, though protected from enemies and hostile rivalry." In answer to this, the Company had declared in the same Report, "that it was not true that their commerce had decreased, although their sales had fallen off in some years by the exclusion of British commerce from the European continent." Now this denial on the part of the Company was a direct contradiction to the Petitions before the House of Commons, and it would be highly incumbent on the Company that this fact should be cleared up by unquestionable evidence; but he was afraid that the facts were in direct opposition to the Report of the Secret Committee; for if he took the account of the returns for the last seventeen years of the prime cost of East-India

goods sent to England, and divided that period into two parts, it would be found on a comparison of the first period and the last, including the intermediate years, that a vast decrease appeared in the trade of the Company. The hon. Proprietor here contrasted the accounts of the two periods, from which, he said it appeared, that, during the last eight years, a decrease of *three millions and upwards* had taken place in the trade of the Company, and that it was very little short of half a million per annum during that period. Now, he said, the object of his noticing this was for the purpose of shewing the necessity of accuracy on the part of the Court, and the folly of stating any items in their Petition and of sending forth any fact to the world that they should not be able to prove. Therefore if the reports furnished upon this subject proved the fact he now stated (and certainly he had no reason to disbelieve the statement so made); if it was clear that, during the period of the last eight years, there was an annual decrease in the Company's trade of £500,000, he submitted, whether the Committee, in giving this fact to the world, acted prudently in drawing the attention of the public to a point unsupported by evidence, which could only submit their Petition to the cavils of those who might be naturally expected



to throw obstacles by every mode they could, in the way of the Company's Petition. But thinking that the Committee must have taken into their view the Indian and China trade together, he naturally adverted to the prime cost of the Indian goods and the Chinese goods, during the same two periods. He thereby found that upon a contrast between those two periods, there was an increase of one million and odd thousand pounds in the amount of the Chinese goods at prime cost, beyond what the state of that trade was during the first eight years; and if he deducted that from the *decrease* of the Bengal trade, during the last eight years, he would find that there was a difference of somewhere about two million six hundred thousand and odd hundred pounds, being an annual decrease of about £300,000. He noticed these points with a view of shewing how necessary it was that the Court should be prepared to shew the statement of the fact in their Petition, that the increase of the trade amounted to upwards of £6,000,000 was well founded in truth. They should be prepared to sustain a statement of this kind by satisfactory evidence, but he was not aware of any documents before the public which warranted such an assertion; and if the Court could not prove that the statement was correct, he should beg leave to



move that the item in question should be left out of the petition ; and that there should be substituted in its stead, a mere *general* statement, " that there had been profit," without pledging the Court to any specific sum. This he suggested simply for the purpose of avoiding any objection that might be taken, by those who were not friends to the Company, to this point, and that the Company might not commit themselves in the public estimation.

Having thus trespassed so long upon the time of the Court, he should trouble them with few farther observations. He was anxious to answer some objections of the honourable Proprietor who first spoke ; and he hoped the Court would excuse him for a few moments whilst he called their attention to those objections. He was the more desirous of doing so because the subject before the Court was of the greatest importance ; and, as it involved a great variety of considerations, it could not be too fully discussed before the Petition went into the world. It seemed to him, the honourable Proprietor's motive for deciding upon this question was rather an extraordinary one. If he remembered correctly, his declaration was, " that such was his veneration for the system and establishments in India, that he was unwilling to meddle with, or touch a single brick in any

part of the building, even if the change was to be effected with advantage—he was against all changes whatsoever.”

Mr. *Abel Chapman* begged pardon for interrupting the honourable gentleman; but he must excuse him if he denied having said any such thing as that now imputed to him.

Mr. *Hume* resumed :—The honourable gentleman’s words were these; “He was averse to all kinds of changes; and that he would not give any permission to any alteration in the present establishment of the East-India Company.”

Now, he would submit to the Court, whether they would adopt a proposition which signified, that whatever might be the situation of the establishments of the East-India Company—however imperfect it might become, either from the effects of time or the natural degeneracy to which all human institutions were subject; still, no changes were to be effected, whatever advantage they might produce even to the concerns of the Company themselves. Surely this was so unreasonable a doctrine, that it was impossible it could be seriously entertained in a discussion of this nature. There was no institution of human erection free from some kind of imperfection; and in which there was not always room for amendment, however perfect it might be. But to hold out